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Blindness in High Places

By now, it would seem that almost everything that could be said about Communist Cuba has been said. But it hasn't. There still continues to be a stream of disturbing information indicating utter failure as the problem developed, utter failure in reacting to it when the problem became clear even to those who preferred to pretend it didn't exist, and continued utter failure in present approaches.

Previously secret testimony by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara before the House Appropriations Subcommittee showed that after receiving information about Soviet missile locations in Cuba last fall, our U2 planes were sent to photograph the wrong parts of the Cuban island and some key locations were ignored.

Mr. McNamara tried to alibi with the "bad weather" story that had been used to camouflage the failure to get specific intelligence earlier last October. In response, Rep. William E. Minshall, R-Ohio, produced weather reports for the questioned period showing clear skies.

The testimony also showed an unwillingness on the part of some high officials to face facts.

Mr. McNamara said, "I do not believe it (Cuba) is being used as a base for the export of Communism on

any substantial degree today."

Assistant Secretary of State Edwin M. Martin said, however, that Castro had exported into Latin America some 1,000 to 1,500 Reds trained in guerrilla activity and subversion, with subsequent events indicating their activities are under way.

Central Intelligence Agency Director John A. McCone said, "Fidel Castro is spurring and supporting the efforts of Communists and other revolutionary elements to overthrow and seize control of the governments of Latin America."

These three comments from responsible officials show clearly that somebody's wrong, and it is not hard for even the laymen to determine who.

It is bad enough that our leaders failed to recognize the Cuban problem until too late, then failed to carry through effective remedial action. It is even more disturbing, however, that they still refuse to act resolutely.

Our failure regarding Communist Cuba seems to stem from a determination on the part of some high in the Kennedy administration simply to pretend the problem does not exist until it bursts upon their consciousness by sheer force. It has done it before, and continuing that kind of vacuum policy will assure it will do so again.